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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR YAMAMOTO DISCUSSES COUNTERTERRORISM

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Joe Donovan. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) Summary. During a March 27 meeting with the DCM, MOFA Ambassador for Counterterrorism (CT) Cooperation, Reconstruction Activities in Iraq and North Korea Nuclear Issues Tadamichi Yamamoto:

-- stressed the need to identify implementable steps for the next U.S.-Japan-Australia CT Trilateral,

-- briefed the DCM on Japan's CT priorities, and

-- expressed hope that a high-level U.S. visit could reenergize Japanese ministries to focus on CT. End Summary.

CT Trilateral

¶2. (C) Tadamichi Yamamoto, Ambassador for Counterterrorism Cooperation, Reconstruction Activities in Iraq and North Korea Nuclear Issues, told DCM Donovan on March 27 that he understood it might take some time to schedule the next U.S.-Japan-Australia Counterterrorism (CT) Trilateral, originally planned for March. The Government of Japan is adjusting to the new timeline and will plan a different approach to the Trilateral if it is held in June or July. Japan has scheduled a bilateral CT dialogue with ASEAN in early June and, if the Trilateral is held after that bilateral, Japan would be able to present a concrete plan of action to the United States and Australia. Yamamoto hoped to use the Trilateral to coordinate future action with the United States and Australia.

¶3. (C) It is important to identify implementable steps for CT cooperation, Yamamoto stressed. This year, Japan's CT programs will be limited to Southeast Asia, but he said Japan hopes to expand them to South Asia and Bangladesh, in particular, next year. Bangladesh borders Burma and suffers from poor governance, leaving it vulnerable to exploitation by terrorists, Yamamoto observed. Looking at Central Asia would be the next step, although including it in Japan's CT planning may be several years in coming. When asked about the possibility of joint training, Yamamoto agreed that it would be a good thing to do, but remarked he is unconvinced that it is welcome in countries like the Philippines. In his experience, the Philippines is reluctant to train with others, so it is important to discuss any proposal for this kind of activity with them carefully. A low-key approach is probably best, Yamamoto suggested.

Need to Motivate GOJ to Focus on CT

¶4. (C) A visit to Japan by Ambassador Crumpton would greatly

benefit the CT cause in Japan, Yamamoto emphasized. Ambassador Crumpton's presence would be substantively helpful, and would also impress upon Japan's ministries and agencies that CT is an important area that needs constant attention. Yamamoto would like to help arrange high-level meetings for Ambassador Crumpton at the ministries, the National Policy Agency and Prime Minister's Office. In order for Japan to effectively implement CT projects, it needs buy-in from many ministries and agencies, even ones with a domestic focus. Yamamoto lobbied hard to hold the next Trilateral in Tokyo because he wanted to lock in commitments across the Japanese government. When asked for his thoughts on the bilateral Counterterrorism Working Group, Yamamoto thought it would be useful to hold the Trilateral first, in order to focus the participating ministries on the issue.

¶5. (C) Yamamoto assured us that Japan understands the need to be part of the global CT effort, but remains a bit more complacent about terrorist threats than the United States or Australia. Because Japan is not targeted by Islamic fundamentalists, Yamamoto has found it difficult to get the Japanese ministries and agencies -- particularly ones with a domestic focus -- to pay attention to hot spots outside of Southeast Asia.

¶6. (C) Japan's near-term goal is to build CT capacity in Southeast Asia, Yamamoto explained. MOFA hopes to use its new grant aid system to do it. In the coming year, MOFA will have \$70 million of grant aid for counterterrorism projects. It needs to spend the full \$70 million this year and will draw up a menu of project options internally before approaching Southeast Asian governments. Yamamoto predicted that Japan would concentrate its efforts on Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore. When asked if Japan would be constrained in providing equipment such as patrol boats, Yamamoto did not think it would be a problem. Already, Japan is sending two patrol boats to Indonesia. He clarified that Japan's principle of not exporting defense technologies or equipment is not a constitutional or legal restraint, but a policy one. When the Cabinet in 2005 decided to exempt equipment and technological exports to the United States for missile defense purposes, an exemption for the prevention of counterterrorism was included, too.

SCHIEFFER